DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 239 544 HE 016 968

AUTHOR Whittington, Nil
TITLE State Level Review of Doctoral Programs in Texas.
PUB DATE 17 Nov 83
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Junior College Student Personnel Association of Texas (Austin, TX, November 17, 1983).
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Counselor Training; *Doctoral Programs; *Educational Psychology; Educational Quality; Higher Education; *Institutional Evaluation; *Program Evaluation; State Action; *State Colleges; State Standards; Student Personnel Services
IDENTIFIERS *Texas

ABSTRACT

Review of doctoral degree programs in Texas public colleges and universities is discussed. Attention is directed to review procedures and strengths and weaknesses in the state's doctoral programs in educational psychology, counseling and guidance, and student personnel services. Doctoral programs were reviewed because of their high cost and a perceived oversupply and underemployment of doctoral graduates. Consultants responsible for the review examined institutional self-studies and made site visits before judging the quality of faculty, students, facilities, equipment, library, program administration and management, and central administrative support. The committee report on programs in educational psychology, counseling and guidance, and student personnel services noted that candidates for practitioner degrees heavily outnumbered those for the scientist degree. Facilities, space, and equipment for all programs were considered adequate to superior. Weaknesses included the large number of required courses statewide, the limited amount of research and publication in a number of programs, and narrow faculty specialization. Conclusions based on reviews of 19 programs are provided. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED239544

State Level Review of Doctoral Programs in Texas

by

Nil Whittington

Program Director
Division of Academic and Health Affairs
Coordinating Board
Texas College and University System

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Nil Whittington

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

NE 016 968

Presentation to the Annual Conference

of the

Junior College Student Personnel Association of Texa
Austin, Texas
November 17, 1983

State Level Review of Doctoral Programs in Texas

The Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System, is under statutory mandate to review all authorized degree programs in the state's public institutions of higher education. At its January, 1980, meeting, the Board directed the staff to begin review of doctoral level programs because of their high cost and a perceived over-supply and under-employment of doctoral graduates. Board guidelines for the reviews, drafted by the staff and an advisory committee of institutional administrators, require that the reviews be conducted on an academic discipline-by-discipline basis, using eminent out-of-state consultants.

The general purposes of the reviews are to encourage the institutions to conduct periodic, systematic self-assessments to insure that a high level of quality in academic programs is reached and maintained, that efficiency and cost effectiveness are secured in program delivery, and that program offerings are responsive to state needs and resources.

To date, nineteen disciplines have been reviewed. Programs in Educational Psychology, Counseling and Guidance, and Student Personnel Services were combined for review by a single panel of consultants. The purpose of this paper is to exemplify typical Coordinating Board procedures for evaluation of doctoral programs by describing this review, to identify some of the weaknesses in the state's doctoral programs in these areas, and to suggest components of good doctoral education based on reports of the numerous consultant teams the Board has employed.

Reviews of existing programs are scheduled when a new doctoral program in a discipline is formally proposed. The staff initiates a review by letter to the chief executive officers of the involved institutions. In addition to providing relevant information, the letter requests self-studies and invites the faculties to nominate prominent leaders in the discipline to serve as consultants to the Board.

State institutions having programs either in Educational Psychology, Counseling and Guidance, or Student Personnel Services, or some combination of the three, are The University of Texas at Austin; Texas A&M University, College Station; the University of Houston-University Park; Texas Tech University, Lubbock; North Texas State University, Denton; Texas Woman's University, Denton; East Texas State University, Commerce; and Texas Southern University, Houston. These institutions submitted approximately a hundred nominees for this review project. The staff gives all the institutions opportunity to veto any candidate either from service on the committee or from visiting a particular campus. From the survivors of this veto process, the staff selects and contacts candidates who have the expertise needed for the particular configuration of programs to be reviewed.

The number of consultants chosen to conduct a review depends upon the number of institutions and programs involved. If there are many programs, the staff assembles a team large enough to be divided into subteams so that all site visits can be accomplished in a week. The consultants for the review of Educational Psychology, Counseling and Guidance and Student Personnel Services were Dr. Jack Bardon, University of North Carolina at Greensboro; Dr. William Levy Cash, University of Michigan,

Ann Arbor; Dr. Lee J. Cronbach, Professor Emeritus, Stanford; Dr. Tom Elmore, Wake Forest University; Dr. John Feldhusen, Purdue; Dr. John McFadden, University of South Carolina; Dr. Ellis Page, Duke University; and Dr. Lauralee Rockwell, University of Iowa.

The actual dates for the site visits are dependent upon the consultants' schedules. It is sometimes difficult to find a week when eight prominent people are simultaneously free.

Once the consultants are under contract, the staff sends them a large quantity of materials including institutional self-studies. The consultants are expected to familiarize themselves with these materials prior to the site visit.

Conduct of this review was typical. On Monday, November 15, 1982, the consultants were flown into Austin where they met with the Deputy Commissioner and staff members to receive their charge and instructions for conduct of the review and preparation of a report to the Board. The following day, the entire team reviewed the programs at The Unversity of Texas at Austin. When it is necessary to split into subteams, as in this case, the staff considers it important to keep the team together for at least one review. That evening three subteams, each accompanied by a staff member, left Austin for the next review sites. This process was followed each day until the end of the week when the entire team reassembled on the campus of the proposing institution. The staff believes the team as a whole should evaluate the potential of the proposing institution within the context of all the programs being offered in the state. On the final day, the consultants, with staff in attendance to serve as resource persons, drafted a preliminary report before leaving the state.

The consultants' reports usually contain a "state of the state" introduction in which they draw general conclusions from a national perspective about statewide doctoral education in the reviewed discipline. Specific evaluations of each institution's program are made in separate sections of the report which are not shared with other institutions on advice of the doctoral review advisory committee. The consultants judge the quality of faculty, students, facilities, equipment, library, program administration and management, and central administrative support. Reports include suggestions to the administration and faculties for program improvement as well as recommendations to the Board. Recommendations for follow-up review of marginal programs and for termination of weak programs require Board action.

The Board also must take action on the proposal. The consultants report their assessment of the institution's ability to deliver a quality program; however, the Board reserves to itself determination of statewide need for a new program and a proposing institution's ability to satisfy requirements for cost effectiveness within the economic constraints of the state.

Easy access to doctoral education cannot be assured since programs are extremely expensive and state resources are finite. The state appropriates a lump sum based on semester credit hour production to each institution for internal allocation. When a new program is initiated, sufficient income to cover its cost must be generated by existing programs; therefore, the Board must consider the impact of a new program both on existing programs within an institution and on a limited state budget. The Board expects a new program to become self-supporting through formula

funding within three years.

Board action on a proposal will be to approve, deny, or defer it. If approved, the institution, after certifying adequacy of funding, has immediate authority to implement the program. If a program is deferred, it is usually for a specific reason and for a specified period of time. If a program is denied, the institution may submit another proposal at a later date.

Each institution is given opportunity to respond to the consultants' report and these responses become a part of the information provided the Board.

The committee report on programs in Educational Psychology, Counseling and Guidance, and Student Personnel Services points out that, from a national perspective, doctoral degrees in these fields are being awarded at a level perhaps three times the capacity of the traditional academic market to absorb. The programs in Texas display an implicit recognition of this fact since candidates for practitioner degrees heavily outnumber those for the scientist degree -- a reversal of the trend of twenty years ago. The report says, "It is predictable that the growth of practitioner programs may . . . overshoot the mark and lead to a substantial cohort looking for a diminishing number of appropriate positions."

The programs in Texas display a sense of vitality, change, and self-improvement "not very common in these times," according to the consultants. The report says, "Of course, Texas higher education is still growing, while in many other states there is a mood of cutback and retrenchment." Facilities, space, and equipment for all programs were considered adequate to superior.

The team found some weaknesses in Texas programs. They were concerned about the large number of required courses statewide. They point to two causes: 1) professional accreditation agencies which prescribe a long list of required courses and experiences, and 2) the Texas formula funding system based on semester credit hour production. The team recognized the complexity of this problem but urged more attention to it.

The consultants also were alarmed by the limited amount of research and publication in a number of programs. In some cases teaching loads were too great to allow the faculty to engage in research. In other instances where faculty research was being conducted, students were not participating in that research. In several institutions the number of required courses was so excessive that students had few opportunities to take elective credit or to pursue independent study.

At some institutions the consultants found that almost the entire faculty held tenured positions, which did not allow for a young, fresh eager new faculty with new ideas. At one institution, faculty salaries were so low as to necessitate summer employment, and the consultants feared faculty burn-out.

Other problems identified in some of the institutions were narrow faculty specialization, lack of faculty interaction with other scholars in the discipline, and a student-faculty ratio too large to permit adequate internship supervision. Lack of APA and CACRP accreditation of a number of programs was thought to endanger student opportunities to obtain licensure and to obtain employment in other states. The consultants noted that admission requirements were quite low in several of the programs

and suggested that this be investigated. Dissertations at one institution were of poor quality, especially in statistical analysis of data. The consultants were particularly concerned about the lack of residency requirements at some institutions. They noted at one that students who considered themselves "full time" students were also employed full time.

What conclusions can be drawn regarding the requisites for a good doctoral program from the nineteen reviews that the Coordinating Board has conducted?

First, it should be noted that the doctoral degree is a research degree monitored by research faculty. A Coordinating Board task force studying education degrees has indicated that both the PhD and the EdD are research degrees, even though different research methodologies might be used and different reserach problems might be addressed. Institutions, in order to have good doctoral programs, should have a strong research orientation and their reward systems should include research productivity. The faculty/mentor and student/apprentice roles appear crucial to good doctoral education and students should have opportunity to research with faculty members.

Institutions should provide adequate financial support for students. Doctoral education is a full-time job and institutions should provide sufficient support to enable students to devote their full attention to it. In some disciplines, top-notch doctoral faculty are entrepreneurs who raise money to support their own research and their own graduate students. To obtain extensive extramural financing requires substantive research topics, another requirement of a good doctoral program.

Opportunities should be provided for students to cross-study in

other departments and the faculty should engage in healthy interaction with other areas of the institution as well as with other scholars in the discipline. In the case of Educational Psychology, links with the Psychology department appear particular desirable. Links with Clinical and/or Counseling Psychology were deemed desirable for Counselor Education departments at institutions having both these programs.

The consultants feel that there is no substitute for the type of immersion in doctoral education which residency requirements are designed to provide. They expressed concern about programs that permit students to attain the terminal degree by attending classes part-time and on weekends.

Students should be encouraged and motivated to present results of their research at professional organizations and to publish in refereed journals. Students also should be supported in attendance at professional meetings.

In good doctoral programs there is flexibility in course requirements. Each doctoral program is unique and should be tailored to the student's professional interests. Too many required courses constrain the kind of independent study and research activities which should characterize doctoral education.

Although not true of all doctoral programs, many of the Coordinating Board's teams of consultants consider a Master's degree important and encourage institutions to advise students to take it. The consultants who reviewed Educational Psychology, Counseling and Guidance, and Student Personnel Services did not encourage direct progress from the baccalaureate to the doctorate.

A good mix of students is also believed to strengthen a doctoral

program. Consultants mention the importance not only of in-state students drawn from a broad geographical distribution but also out-of-state and foreign students. The consultants in the Educational Psychology review were particularly concerned that the programs include a good mix of women and minorities.

Administrative support is important for a doctoral program, particularly in Texas. Because of the way funds are appropriated in this state, the program must have central administrative support to get an adequate budget.

All of the teams stressed the importance of faculty renewal and particularly regret that Texas does not have sabbatic leaves. The consultants encourage the institutions to find some way to provide renewal leaves for their faculties.

In the Educational Psychology, Counseling and Guidance, and Student Personnel Services review, internships and/or practica were considered especially important and all Texas institutions had them. In all programs reviewed to this point, the availability of computer time and facilities is becoming increasingly critical.

Texas is committed to quality doctoral education and will continue to expect each program in the state to be the best it can be. The process of review, the identification of program weaknesses, and the recognition of requisites for excellence in doctoral education are all components of progress toward that goal.